

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A pallet comprising:
  - a plurality of elongated runners, each runner having at least one load bearing top panel and at least one perforated tab extending above the top panel, each perforated tab having at least one opening disposed therein;
  - a substantially flat deck member adjacent the top panels, the deck member having slits disposed therein for receiving the perforated tabs, thereby locking the runners into a fixed parallel orientation to each other; and
  - elongate lateral supports extending through the openings in the perforated tabs to provide lateral support to the pallet.
2. (original) The pallet of claim 1 wherein the runners include two side runners, each side runner has upwardly extending solid tabs extending above the at least one top panel, and the solid tabs abut opposing ends of the lateral supports to prevent the lateral supports from sliding out of the openings in the perforated tabs.
3. (original) The pallet of claim 2 wherein the deck member rests on the top panels between the upwardly extending solid tabs.
4. (original) The pallet of claim 1 wherein each runner comprises a bottom panel, upwardly extending opposing side panels disposed at right angles to the bottom panel, inwardly extending load bearing top panels disposed at right angles to the side panels, and downwardly extending center mating panels disposed at right angles to the top panels, the center mating panels being in adjacent, facing relationship to each other.
5. (original) The pallet of claim 4 wherein locking tabs extending downward from

the center mating panels are inserted into slots disposed in the bottom panel to maintain the runner in a folded position.

6. (original) The pallet of claim 1 wherein each runner further comprises flaps die cut from the bottom panel, the flaps being foldable into a vertical upstanding position, the flaps having tabs that are inserted into lateral slots in the at least one top panel to prevent trapezoiding.

7. (original) The pallet of claim 6 wherein the runners and deck member are made of corrugated board.

8. (original) The pallet of claim 7 wherein the flutes in the deck member run parallel to the runners.

9. (original) The pallet of claim 1 wherein the runners, deck member and lateral supports are made of paper.

10. (original) The pallet of claim 9 wherein the lateral supports are formed from a sheet of wound and formed laminated paper.

11. (original) The pallet of claim 10 wherein the lateral supports have a substantially rectangular cross-sectional profile.

12. (original) The pallet of claim 11 wherein the lateral supports have upper and lower surfaces and opposing beads integrally formed in the upper and lower surfaces.

13. (original) The pallet of claim 10 wherein the lateral supports have a substantially

circular cross-sectional profile.

14. (original) The pallet of claim 2 wherein the side runners further comprise openings cut into either end of the at least one top panel to accommodate vertical support posts.

15. (original) A method of constructing a pallet comprising the steps of:

a. providing a substantially flat deck member having slits disposed therein, elongate lateral supports and a plurality of blanks, each blank having a bottom panel, two side panels connected to opposing edges of the bottom panel along fold lines, a pair of load bearing top panels connected to the side panels along parallel fold lines, a pair of center mating panels connected to the top panels along parallel fold lines, perforated tabs die cut from each top panel, locking tabs extending from both center mating panels and flaps die cut from the bottom panel;

b. folding the flaps into upright, vertical positions;

c. folding the blanks along the fold lines so that the center mating panels are brought together in adjacent, facing relationship while inserting the locking tabs into slots disposed in the bottom panel and inserting the flaps into lateral slots disposed in the top panels, thereby constructing open-ended box-like elongated runners having perforated tabs extending upward above the top panels;

d. placing the deck member over the runners so that the perforated tabs extend through the slits in the deck member; and

e. inserting the lateral supports into openings in the perforated tabs to lock the components together.